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By 2nd Lt. Balinda O'Neal Dresel

Alaska's 297th Military Police Company ready for Middle East deployment

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — A deployment ceremony was held for approximately 80 Alaska Army National Guardsmen assigned to the 297th Regional Support Group's 297th Military Police Company at the Alaska National Guard Armory here March 13.

The Guardsmen are deploying to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility this month in support of Operation Spartan Shield for about nine months.

"We have been trained, tested and validated to execute our mission as military police officers," said Capt. Kevin Fulmer, 297th Military Police Company commander as he addressed his troops. "Today marks the last day of the 297th Military Police Company's post mobilization training."

The MPs transitioned from Title 32 National Guard status and became Title 10 active duty Soldiers in February. While Army units typically displace to another active duty station to conduct post-mobilization training, the MPs completed their training here.

According to the Association of the United States Army, the Army recognizes that future actions against near-peer adversaries could require a much larger mobilization effort and is looking to increase the number of primary and contingency Mobilization Force Generation Installations.

"The mobilization of the 297th MP Company on JBER served as a "proof of principle" for the joint base as a Mobilization Force Generation Installation under United States Army Pacific," said Brig. Gen. Charles Lee Knowles, Alaska Army National Guard commander. "This was the first Army home-station mobilization on JBER since it became a joint base."

The completion of the MPs' post mobilization training here signifies a successful total force effort from the Army Reserve's 3301st Mobilization Support Battalion, United States Army Pacific's 2nd Battalion, 196th Infantry Brigade, Training Support Battalion, and the 673rd Air Base Wing.

"This was a collective effort by service members and civilians from active duty, National Guard, and Reserves of the Army, and Air Force to exercise a new model of mobilizing forces," said Knowles. "It was the first unified effort to synergize and leverage the Department of Defense resources here at JBER to maximum efficiency and effect."

Typically, mobilized Soldiers are sent to training out of state for 30 to 50 days before deploying overseas. Staying at JBER for training provided more efficient and effective communication with the home unit and allowed the bonus benefit of fewer months away from families.

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“Right now, Soldiers are able to see their families for a small amount of time,” said Fulmer, which might not have been possible if the unit was at another training location. “That definitely helps morale out a lot for the American Soldier.”

During his speech, Knowles said that he saw confident warriors, comfortable with what lies ahead – ready to go forward and defend our nation’s and allies’ security interests standing before him.

The Soldiers deploying are military policemen and are trained to protect lives and property on military installations by enforcing military laws and regulations. They also control traffic, respond to all emergencies, and provide crime prevention measures.

“I cannot thank the families enough for your strength, courage and support of the Alaska Army National Guard and the mission the United States Army has given them,” said Fulmer. “I have both husbands and wives in my unit and it’s the greatest responsibility I have been given yet. I have full intent to bring them home safe.”

While in CENTCOM AOR, the 297th MP Company will be tasked with providing law enforcement and personnel security details through OSS’s mission to build partner capacity in the Middle East to promote regional self-reliance and increase security.

The 297th MP Company last deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2013. The unit was also called upon to provide disaster relief to Cordova, Alaska, in January 2012, after an unprecedented snowfall lead to a state emergency. Most recently, the unit performed defense support to civil authorities and security operations in Washington, D.C., in support of the 58th Presidential Inauguration in 2017.

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PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **Facebook link** includes a post with the complete selection of full-resolution, free downloadable images. (May not be accessible from all military computers.)
https://www.facebook.com/pg/AlaskaNationalGuard/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10157065982236796
3. **DVIDS link** includes story and selected full-resolution photos. (Primarily for media, DVIDS is accessible from .mil computers.) <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/314291/alaskas-297th-military-police-company-ready-middle-east-deployment>



A deployment ceremony was held for approximately 80 Alaska Guardsmen from the 297th Military Police Company at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, March. 13, 2019. The military policemen will depart this month for the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operation Spartan Shield for about nine months. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Balinda O’Neal Dresel)



Alaska Army Guard Capt. Kevin Fulmer, left, 297th Military Police Company commander, and 1st Sgt. Chris Cedeberg, 297th MP Company first sergeant, furl the company colors in a ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, March. 13, 2019, casing them in preparation for the company's deployment. Approximately 80 Alaska Guardsmen from the 297th Military Police Company are deploying to the U.S. Central command area of responsibility in support of Operations Spartan Shield for about nine months. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Balinda O'Neal Dresel)



Brig. Gen. Charles Lee Knowles, Alaska Army National Guard commander, addresses deploying Guardsmen and their families during a ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, March. 13, 2019. Approximately 80 Alaska Guardsmen from the 297th Military Police Company are deploying to the U.S. Central command area of responsibility in support of Operations Spartan Shield for about nine months. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Balinda O'Neal Dresel)



Alaska Army Guardsmen from the 297th Military Police Company visit with family members following a deployment ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, March. 13, 2019. Approximately 80 Alaska Guardsmen from the 297th Military Police Company are deploying to the U.S. Central command area of responsibility in support of Operations Spartan Shield for about nine months. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Balinda O'Neal Dresel)



Alaska Army Guardsmen from the 297th Military Police Company visit with family members following a deployment ceremony at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, March. 13, 2019. Approximately 80 Alaska Guardsmen from the 297th Military Police Company are deploying to the U.S. Central command area of responsibility in support of Operations Spartan Shield for about nine months. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Balinda O'Neal Dresel)